

April U.S. Unemployment Report:

Individuals with fewer skills, those with less education, youth, minorities, and new veterans continue to feel the burden of disproportionate unemployment impacts

[The Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) released job growth and unemployment numbers on May 4, 2012 indicating that the U.S. economy gained 115,000 jobs in April 2012. The unemployment rate was little changed at 8.1 percent. The April unemployment report continues to shine a light on how various groups are faring and tells a grave story about the large number of Americans who are not participating full time in the labor market. **According to the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#), roughly 23 million people are unemployed, discouraged workers and others ‘marginally attached’ to the labor force who have indicated that they want to work, and people working part-time for economic reasons because their hours have been scaled back or they were unable to find full-time work.** This number is much higher than at the start of the recession or any other time for which we have available data – dating back to 1994.

Key Findings:

- The official national unemployment rate was little changed at 8.1 percent, or 12.5 million people.
- The number of long-term unemployed, or those unemployed for 27 weeks or longer, remained little changed at 5.1 million people.
- The long-term unemployed accounted for 41.3 percent of the unemployed.

The official unemployment rate obscures the disproportionate impact the sluggish economy has had on individuals with fewer skills, those with less education, youth, minorities, and especially new veterans.

For example, in April 2012:

- The unemployment rate for all men 20 years and older was 8.7 percent. The unemployment rate for **African American men** 20 years and older was 17.3 percent. This was an increase from March and was **more than double the rate** of their White counterparts. The unemployment rate for **Hispanic or Latino men** 20 years and older was slightly over 10 percent.
- The unemployment rate for all teenagers was 25 percent – unchanged from the month previous. The unemployment rate for White youth ages 16-19 was over 20 percent. **The unemployment rate for African American youth was nearly 38 percent.** The unemployment rate for Hispanic or Latino youth was over 23 percent.
- Individuals over the age of 25 with less than a high school diploma **had an unemployment rate over 14 percent**, compared to 9.6 percent among high school graduates, and 4.1 percent among those with some college education.
- Gulf War era Veterans, (those that served in the armed forces since 2001 and have returned to civilian life) **had an unemployment rate of 10.9 percent.** Forty-nine percent of these new veterans are between the ages of 25-34. Eighty-two percent of new veterans are men.
- **Nearly 1 million people in America** have given up looking for work because they no longer believe there is job for them.

Action Needed to Get Americans Back to Work Now

Far too many of our nation's job seekers continue to experience long periods of joblessness and vulnerable populations face significantly higher unemployment rates than the national average, – leading to prolonged hardship for millions of American families. An America where everyone gets a fair shot means that access to employment opportunities, earned income to meet basic needs, and on-ramps to basic education and training programs to move up the career ladder should be available to all, even our most disadvantaged job seekers.

At a time when our future economic prosperity hangs in the balance, we urge Congress to work together for the benefit of all American workers. Specifically, we encourage re-focusing on the following priorities:

- **Preserve funding** for workforce development, adult basic education and critical safety net resources in the FY13 budget.
- **[Reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act and include Transitional Jobs](#)** as an allowable use of training funds to ensure that individuals with barriers to employment have access to work opportunities and earned income that stabilizes individuals, and benefits employers and communities.
- **Take up and pass measures like the [Pathways Back to Work Act](#) to provide Subsidized Employment and Transitional Jobs for youth and low-income adults and youth.** Such investments will leverage the existing capacity and knowledge base within the field; build upon investments in Subsidized Employment and Transitional Jobs programs made by other federal agencies, such as the Department of Labor and the Department of Health and Human Services; and provide support for programs that demonstrate capacity to serve as on-ramps to jobs created through related federal actions to spur economic growth.
- **[Provide maximum flexibility under key federal programs and streamline services](#) and regulation to facilitate the development and expansion of Subsidized Employment and Transitional Jobs.** These programs include Community Development Block Grants, Food Stamp Employment and Training, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, HEARTH Act, Senior Community Service Employment Program, and the Community Services Block Grant.

We urge Congress to lead the country back to economic prosperity by focusing on efforts that give every American a fair shot in getting and keeping a job and accessing critical basic education and training opportunities. Contact the National Transitional Jobs Network at ntjn@heartlandalliance.org for more information.

The National Transitional Jobs Network (NTJN), a project of Heartland Alliance, is a coalition of city, state, and federal policy makers; community workforce organizations; and anti-poverty nonprofit service providers and advocacy organizations committed to advancing and strengthening Transitional Jobs (TJ) programs around the country so that people with barriers to employment can gain success in the workplace and improve their economic lives and the economic conditions of their communities. Together we ensure that policies will account for the hard-to-employ, that the public understands the need to invest in these services, that programs are able to effectively serve as many people as possible, and that best practices and technical assistance are widely shared and implemented across the country. The NTJN is the singular national clearinghouse for resources, tools, and expertise for building Transitional Jobs programs, is the primary organization for gathering and disseminating best practices to improve the model nationally, and leads the national dialogue about employment and advancement strategies for the hard to employ.